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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-fifth session
Item 87 (a) of the preliminary list*
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Second regular session of 1990
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 33 of resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly reaffirmed the provision contained in its resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 concerning the representation of developing countries at the executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The Assembly further requested the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to include a section on the implementation of that provision in his annual report to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1990.

2. In resolution 32/197, it was stated (in para. 36 of the annex) that steps should be taken to ensure adequate developing country representation at the executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

3. The requested section on implementation of the provision is presented by the Director-General in the annex, which consists of an introductory note and relevant statistical tables.

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* A/45/50.

ANNEX

Representation of developing countries at the executive management and other central and decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to paragraph 33 of General Assembly resolution 44/211, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation requested organizations members of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, to provide information on staff of developing and developed countries encumbering executive management and other central decision-making functions at their headquarters and at the country level as of 1 January 1988, 1989 and 1990. In addition, the same information was requested with respect to those staff servicing all advisory functions on technical co-operation projects and on female staff. The information made available is summarized in the statistical tables that follow. The Director-General is grateful to those organizations which, in the limited time available, responded to his request for information.

2. It should be noted that, within the secretariat structure, "executive management level" is interpreted as D-1 and above. However, the concept of "central decision-making functions" is more difficult. This is particularly true in operational activities, where such functions are exercised both by central and executive management levels and, with some variance, both among organizations and in given duty stations. Accordingly, information is provided concerning professional staff at the country level without attempting a more detailed analysis.

3. A consolidated table for the year 1990 is presented below:

Table 1. Developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities, consolidated staff data, 1990

	Total staff D-1 and above		Total staff P-1 to P-5		Percentage of total from developing countries		
	Developing countries	Developed countries	Developing countries	Developed countries	D-1 and above	P-1 to P-5	Total staff
IFAD	8	6	38	30	57.8	55.9	56.1
WMO	8	9	38	80	47.1	32.3	34.1
ICAO	7	1	25	34	87.5	42.4	34.1
UPU	1	-	11	3	100	78.6	80.0
UNIDO	13	25	143	251	34.2	36.2	36.1
WIPO	7	-	17	9	100	65.4	72.7
ECA	14	-	155	15	100	91.2	91.8
IMO	3	13	40	59	18.8	40.4	37.4
ITU	2	1	17	31	66.7	35.4	37.3
UNFPA	10	9	68	63	52.6	51.9	52.0
IAEA	4	3	21	24	57.1	46.7	47.0
DTCD	9	6	36	74	60.0	32.7	36.0
WFP	11	22	139	183	33.3	43.2	42.3
UNESCO	49	63	460	470	43.8	49.5	48.8
UNHCR	20	55	283	321	38.5	46.8	46.5
ILO a/	-	-	228	415	-	35.5	-
UNDP b/	70	98	325	401	41.7	44.8	44.2
ESCWA	8	1	50	15	88.9	76.9	78.4
ESCAP	9	4	110	57	60.7	65.9	66.1
UNCTAD	14	14	73	114	50.0	39.0	40.5
FAO	115	116	821	1 115	41.7	42.4	42.4
UNICEF	31	51	203	243	37.8	45.5	44.3

a/ Limited data available.

b/ See para. 5 of introduction.

4. Detailed tables on developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities are attached, as follows:

Table 2.A. D-1 and above: developing countries
Table 2.B. D-1 and above: developed countries
Table 3. D-1 and above: regional distribution
Table 4. D-1 and above/P-1 to P-5: male, female
Table 5. Country level professional staff
Table 6. Advisory staff on technical co-operation projects

5. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advised that, owing to computer constraints, it was unable to provide information for 1988 and 1989, except for tables 2.A and 2.B regarding D-1 and above staff at the country level. UNDP further noted that it is not mandated to follow geographical representation as defined for the United Nations and specialized agencies. Recruitment takes place on the basis of competence, needs and skills. Nevertheless, the aim of UNDP recruitment policy is to have an equitable (50/50) representation of professional staff from developed and developing countries. At present, the ratio stands at 55/45 (developed/developing countries).

6. As of the time that the present report was prepared, not all organizations were able to compile the requested data. Information concerning those organizations will be provided when available.

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Table 2.A. Developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities, D-1 and above, developing countries

	Above USG			USG			ASG			D-2			D-1			Total		
	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90
IFAD	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	2	1	3	5	5	2	3	1	8	11	8
WMO	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7	7	5	8	8
ICAO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	6	6	6	6	7
UPU	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	1	1
UNIDO	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	3	3	3	9	12	8	14	17	13
WIPO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	5	3	5	5	5	7
ECA	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	11	11	12	13	13	14
IMO	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	1	2	1	4	5	3
ITU	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2
UNFPA	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	7	7	7	9	9	10
IAEA	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-1	4	2	2	5	3	4
DTCD	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	4	3	2	7	4	6	12	8	9
WFP	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	2	8	9	8	10	11	11
UNESCO	-	-	-	-	2	2	6	5	2	10	9	10	32	33	35	48	49	49
UNHCR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	6	5	14	12	15	18	18	20
ILO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNDP b/	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	4	4	19	21	25	38	45	46	62	71	75
ESCWA	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	6	5	6	8	6	8
ESCAP	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10	8	11	11	9
UNCTAD	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	5	4	3	10	8	10	16	13	14
FAO	1	1	1	-	-	-	5	5	6	12	13	13	107	101	95	125	120	115
UNICEF	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	8	6	18	19	25	41	27	31

a/ Limited data available.

b/ Including D-1 and above at the country level.

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Table 2.B. Developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities, D-1 and above, developed countries

	Above USG			USG			ASG			D-2			D-1			Total		
	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90
IFAD	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	5	4	3	6	6	6
WMO	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	2	3	3	7	8	9
ICAO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	2	2	1
UPU	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
UNIDO	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	3	3	1	2	14	20	20	20	24	25
WIPO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ECA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IMO	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	3	7	7	9	11	11	13
ITU	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
UNFPA	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	-	-	5	6	7	7	8	9
IAEA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	3	2	3	3
DTCD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	3	5	5	4	6
WFP	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	18	17	16	24	23	22
UNESCO	1	1	1	1	-	1	5	5	4	7	10	12	28	37	45	41	53	63
UNHCR	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	7	4	4	18	24	30	36	29	35
ILO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNDP b/	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	2	2	28	35	39	54	60	66	85	98	108
ESCWA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	1	3	2	1
ESCAP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	3	3	5	4	4
UNCTAD	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	4	3	11	9	10	16	14	14
FAO	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	5	38	33	36	118	111	120	161	150	161
UNICEF	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	2	3	12	16	14	28	27	33	44	46	51

a/ Limited data available.

b/ Including D-1 and above at the country level.

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Table 3. Developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities

D-1 and above (by region)

Agency	Africa			Asia and Pacific			Eastern Europe			Western Europe			Latin America			Middle East			North America and Caribbean			Others		
	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90
IFAD	3	4	4	-	3	3	-	-	-	3	3	3	2	2	-	2	2	2	3	3	3	-	-	-
WMO	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
ICAO	2	2	2	1	1	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	-	-	-
UPU	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNIDO	4	5	5	5	6	5	6	5	6	11	12	13	3	3	3	2	3	2	5	4	4	-	-	-
WIPO	2	2	2	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ECA	13	13	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IMO	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	7	7	8	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	3	5	-	-	-
ITU	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
UNFPA	5	4	5	4	5	5	-	-	-	4	4	5	2	2	2	-	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	-
IAEA	1	1	1	4	3	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
DTCD	3	3	4	5	5	5	-	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	3	3	-	-	-
WFP	5	5	5	4	4	4	-	-	-	16	17	17	-	-	-	2	2	2	7	6	5	-	-	-
UNESCO	21	22	24	14	16	14	10	11	14	26	31	37	9	11	9	4	5	6	7	7	8	-	-	-
UNHCR	10	11	12	4	4	5	-	-	-	13	18	20	4	4	4	2	1	1	4	5	6	4	3	3
ILO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNDP b/	-	-	31	-	-	21	-	-	2	-	-	50	-	-	12	-	-	9	-	-	39	-	-	4
ESCWA	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	5	7	3	2	1	-	-	-
ESCAP	-	-	-	14	14	12	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
UNCTAD	6	6	7	7	6	6	3	2	3	10	7	5	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	4	-	-	1
FAO	50	44	46	40	36	38	11	11	12	115	106	101	24	22	20	19	24	18	26	26	40	1	1	1
UNICEF	6	7	14	14	16	18	-	1	1	25	27	29	2	4	3	4	4	3	14	13	17	2	2	3

a/ Limited data available.

b/ See para. 5 of introduction.

Table 4. Developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities

	Developing countries												Developed countries									
	D-1 and above						P-1 to P-5						D-1 and above						P-1 to P-5			
	88		89		90		88		89		90		88		89		90		88		89		90	
	M a/	F a/	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
IFAD	8	-	11	-	8	-	27	1	33	2	36	2	6	-	6	-	6	-	32	5	22	6	24	6
WMO	5	-	8	-	8	-	37	1	33	1	35	3	7	-	8	-	9	-	54	25	53	25	57	23
ICAO	6	-	6	-	7	-	24	2	23	2	23	2	2	-	2	-	1	-	24	6	26	7	25	9
UPU	2	-	1	-	1	-	8	2	10	2	9	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	1
UNIDO	13	1	16	1	12	1	117	22	116	24	114	29	19	1	23	1	24	1	194	50	184	53	195	56
WIPO	5	-	5	-	7	-	17	1	16	1	14	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	5	3	5	4
ECA	13	-	13	-	14	-	127	13	128	16	133	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	5	14	5	11	4
IMO	4	-	5	-	3	-	44	3	44	3	47	3	11	-	11	-	13	-	45	19	45	18	40	19
ITU	2	-	2	-	2	-	19	1	19	1	16	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	26	3	26	3	28	3
UNFPA	8	1	8	1	9	1	37	16	41	19	46	22	6	1	6	2	7	2	34	25	34	27	34	29
IAEA	5	-	3	-	4	-	11	7	15	7	15	6	2	-	3	-	3	-	20	9	16	9	15	9
DTCD	12	-	8	-	9	-	32	6	27	6	28	8	4	1	3	1	6	-	54	22	48	24	47	27
WFP	10	-	11	-	11	-	103	16	105	19	115	24	24	-	23	-	22	-	144	38	133	38	140	43
UNESCO	45	3	48	1	46	3	390	96	372	94	362	98	37	4	36	7	55	8	456	132	433	138	414	156
UNHCR	18	-	18	-	20	-	194	46	205	51	223	60	22	2	25	2	29	3	205	88	210	92	227	94
ILO b/	-	-	-	-	-	-	214	35	202	40	192	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	324	81	328	80	333	82
UNDP c/	-	-	-	-	67	3	-	-	-	-	237	88	-	-	-	-	88	10	-	-	-	-	272	129
ESCWA	8	-	6	-	8	-	34	8	37	9	43	7	3	-	2	-	1	-	11	4	11	3	13	2
ESCAP	11	-	11	-	9	-	70	27	64	23	80	30	4	1	3	1	3	1	54	11	50	11	43	14
UNCTAD	16	-	13	-	14	-	68	16	64	15	59	14	16	-	14	-	14	-	103	18	99	19	92	22
FAO	123	2	119	1	115	-	778	38	780	36	785	36	157	4	146	4	158	3	984	179	955	181	927	188
UNICEF	39	2	23	4	26	5	132	68	135	63	132	71	40	4	38	8	44	7	188	89	157	79	158	85

a/ M = Male F = Female.

b/ Limited data available.

c/ See para. 5 of introduction.

Table 5. Developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities

	Country level professional staff								
	Developed countries			Developing countries			Percentage of professional staff from developing countries		
Agency	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90
IFAD a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WMO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ICAO	-	1	6	6	6	5	100	85.7	83.3
UPU a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNIDO	9	-	15	18	17	19	66.7	58.6	55 9
WIPO	-	-	-	1	1	-	100	100	-
ECA	10	8	7	65	64	66	86.7	88.9	90.4
IMO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ITU	2	2	2	7	7	7	77.8	77.8	77.8
UNFPA	21	24	26	18	18	23	46.2	42.9	46.9
IAEA	1 025	1 022	1 147	369	562	548	26.5	35.5	32.3
DTCD a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WFP	43	36	37	33	37	39	43.4	50.7	51.3
UNESCO	63	65	51	51	53	49	47.7	44.9	49.0
UNHCR	317	340	663	244	267	303	43.5	44.0	31.4
ILO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNDP b/	-	-	221	-	-	196	-	-	47.0
ESCWA a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ESCAP a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNCTAD a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FAO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNICEF	36	35	39	41	43	45	53.2	55.1	53.6

a/ Not applicable.

b/ See para. 5 of introduction.

Table 6. Developing country representation at executive management and other central decision-making levels of secretariat structures in the area of operational activities

	Advisory staff on technical co-operation projects								
	Developed countries			Developing countries			Percentage of advisory staff from developing countries		
	88	89	90	88	89	90	88	89	90
IFAD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WMO	12	17	18	15	22	19	55.5	56.4	51.3
ICAO	150	154	130	81	104	131	35.1	40.3	50.2
UPU a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNIDO	6	7	8	5	4	5	45.5	36.4	38.5
WIPO	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
ECA	7	7	10	27	35	39	79.4	83.3	79.6
IMO	5	8	7	2	2	2	28.6	20.0	22.2
ITU	48	54	51	29	31	33	37.7	36.5	39.3
UNFPA a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IAEA a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DTCD	132	54	N/A	69	35	N/A	34.3	37.6	-
WFP a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNESCO	28	20	17	15	16	19	34.9	44.4	52.8
UNHCR a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ILO	270	294	271	142	161	166	34.5	35.4	38.0
UNDP b/	-	-	87	-	-	87	-	-	50.0
ESCWA	-	-	-	13	12	12	100	100	100
ESCAP	3	2	1	6	6	6	66.7	75.0	85.7
UNCTAD	12	15	16	6	4	6	66.7	78.9	72.7
FAO a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNICEF	223	235	243	158	168	182	41.5	41.7	42.8

a/ Not applicable.

b/ See para. 5 of introduction.

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. In paragraph 17 (g) of its resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly requested the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation "to conduct an independent study aimed at developing, among other possible ways to improve the co-ordination of the United Nations system, at the country level, the concept of a document containing the integrated operational response of the United Nations system at the country level to the national programme framework of the recipient Government for operational activities for development, which would give greater coherence to existing programming instruments". The Director-General was requested to submit the study to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council.

2. The Director-General submits to the General Assembly in the annex to the present note the study on the above subject, which has been prepared by a senior consultant engaged by the Director-General, Mr. Bhim S. Mahajan.

3. In paragraph 17 (g) of resolution 44/211 the Director-General was requested to include with the study his views on the impact of the approach, in particular on the role of the resident co-ordinator, on the leadership role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and on the relationship and relevance of such an approach to the existing co-ordinating mechanisms of the organizations of the United Nations system at the country level, and on possible ways to implement the relevant elements contained therein. The Director-General provides his views elsewhere, in his annual report.

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* A/45/50.

ANNEX

Study on national programme frameworks and the integrated operational response of the United Nations system

SUMMARY

The concept of a document containing the integrated response of the United Nations system at the country level to national programme frameworks presupposes the existence of such frameworks, which in fact is not the case. The study accordingly focuses on (a) the development of an operational national programme framework by each recipient Government; (b) linking the existing programming processes of various United Nations organizations through a joint appraisal mechanism orchestrated by the Government at the country level; and (c) strengthening the role of the United Nations resident co-ordinator in mobilizing the United Nations system's support to the Government for the development of the national programme framework and for the organization of the appraisal mechanism through which the existing programming processes will be linked. The latter would involve the setting up of an appraisal and action committee chaired by an influential government representative. The conclusions of the committee on the initial scrutiny of the individual country programmes would form the basis for the elaboration of the "document" envisaged in paragraph 17 (g) of resolution 44/211 in order to reflect the integrated operational response of the United Nations system at the country level to the national programme framework.

The underlying premise of the study is to transfer responsibility for resource management effectively to the recipient countries.

Specific proposals for action emphasize the need for harmonization of programming cycles and reaching a common understanding within the United Nations system about the definition of a project and a programme, the latter as distinct from the country programme; about format and content of project, programme and country programme documents; the periodicity and content of progress and terminal reports; monitoring and evaluation arrangements; accounting and auditing procedures; programme execution and implementation modalities; use of national experts and institutions; provision of monetary incentives to national civil servants; assistance to the private sector and non-governmental organizations; and other similar issues on which a common approach is desirable and feasible. It is recommended that consultations be started by the resident co-ordinators with Governments about the nature and content of the national programme framework and the setting up of an appraisal and action committee.

There is growing awareness within the United Nations system of the need for change and a wide measure of agreement on the directions changes should take, but movement in those directions has been restrained in the past by the absence of a suitable mechanism with sufficient authority to initiate action and monitor progress.

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 11	4
	A. Focus on the national programme framework	1 - 7	4
	B. Towards a United Nations system operational response	8 - 11	6
II.	THE ESSENCE OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	12 - 19	7
	A. The paramount role of the recipient country	12 - 13	7
	B. The opportunity cost of grant assistance	14	8
	C. The impact of global development objectives	15	8
	D. The diversity of aid procedures	16	9
	E. The preoccupation with volume of aid and delivery	17	9
	F. The donor orientation of aid	18 - 19	9
III.	NATIONAL PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM'S RESPONSE	20 - 54	10
	A. Basic postulates	20 - 21	10
	B. Project vs. programme approach	22 - 26	10
	C. Existing policy frameworks for country programming	27 - 33	11
	D. A holistic national programme framework	34	13
	E. Round-table meetings and consultative groups	35	14
	F. The NaTCAP process	36 - 38	14
	G. The main components of a national programme framework	39	15
	H. Harmonization of programme cycles and procedures	40	16
	I. Country programme appraisal mechanism	41 - 43	16
	J. The critical role of the resident co-ordinator	44 - 47	18
	K. Agenda for action	48 - 54	19

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Focus on the national programme framework

1. In paragraph 17 (g) of its resolution 44/211, entitled "Comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", the General Assembly requested the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation:

> "to conduct an independent study aimed at developing, among other possible ways to improve the co-ordination of the United Nations system, at the country level, the concept of a document containing the integrated operational response of the United Nations system at the country level to the national programme framework of the recipient Government for operational activities for development, which would give greater coherence to existing programming instruments, and to submit this study to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, including an analysis containing his views on the impact of this approach, in particular on the role of the resident co-ordinator, on the leadership role of the United Nations Development Programme, and on the relationship and relevance of such an approach to the existing co-ordinating mechanisms of the organizations of the United Nations system at the country level, such as National Technical Co-operation Assessment and Programmes, round tables and consultative groups, and possible ways to implement the relevant elements contained therein".

2. The present study was conducted during the months of March and April 1990 by a senior consultant retained by the Director-General who had earlier undertaken a review of programming of operational activities of the United Nations system pursuant to paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 42/196 of 11 December 1987. 1/ The consultant has drawn extensively on the results of his earlier discussions with representatives of several organizations of the United Nations system, taking due account of their subsequent reactions to his recommendations. He has had access to the information supplied by many of the resident co-ordinators containing their initial views and those of the Governments they were accredited to on the subject of integrated programming of operational activities of the United Nations system following the adoption of resolution 44/211.

3. Consultations were held with representatives of Member States at United Nations Headquarters in New York on the intent of the "independent study" from their standpoint; with Mr. Arthur Brown, formerly Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and currently Governor of the Central Bank of Jamaica; and with members of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, at the Committee's spring session at Geneva in April 1990. Those consultations were supplemented by more extensive discussions with representatives of UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for

Agricultural Development (IFAD) and some of the specialized agencies at their respective headquarters. Representatives of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in New York provided relevant information from their respective organizations.

4. It became apparent during the consultations that it would be futile to conceive of "a document containing the integrated operational response of the United Nations system at the country level to the national programme framework of the recipient Government" without considering the possible nature of the national programme framework itself. In the preamble of its resolution the General Assembly reaffirms that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In actual practice, however, even in countries that formulate periodic national plans on a formal basis, these provide only broad guidance on national development objectives. By the very nature of the economic and social situation in the developing countries, almost any intervention can be shown to be related to those objectives. It is significant that in resolution 44/211, paragraph 17, the Assembly thus begins its proposals for action with the need for a more focused government instrument, namely, that:

> "Governments should formulate, in accordance with their own development plans and priorities, integrated national programme frameworks setting out co-operation requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system, which would enable the system to support more effectively the development priorities of developing countries and to be more country-focused and would facilitate the development of a programme approach, through the clear definition of national objectives and systematic analysis of development problems and constraints".

5. There are, however, a wide variety of analytical studies undertaken in several countries, on a sector and subsector basis, that can perhaps provide more precise analysis of the structural and institutional constraints that operational activities of the United Nations system can help overcome. However, such studies are not carried out systematically and the information on priorities and domestic resource allocation is hard to interpret. The annual budget is perhaps the most critical test of government priorities for the allocation of resources on a short-term basis in most countries.

6. Organizations of the United Nations system that have resorted to the instrument of country programming in one form or another - UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO - have thus had to spend considerable time and effort in commissioning or undertaking special surveys and assessments before entering into wide-ranging discussions with the appropriate government departments and other national institutions as part of their programming processes. Organizations like WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which allocate their resources on a "project" basis, also, in essence, follow a similar procedure drawing on special studies or reviews and discussions with appropriate government departments and other local institutions at a more micro-level. General economic and sectoral surveys carried out by the World Bank and the analytical work

undertaken in support of its investment programme in individual countries provide useful background information as well as guidance on national priorities in specific areas. Some of the bilateral donors also undertake analysis of recipient country's priorities to focus their assistance on subjects of mutual concern. No successful attempt has been made to link all these exercises into a composite process under government leadership.

7. After careful reflection on the real intent of General Assembly resolution 44/211 as a whole, and in the light of the work already undertaken in response to the earlier resolution 42/196 of 11 December 1987, the study accordingly has focused on three main issues:

(a) The development of an operational "national programme framework" by each recipient Government with such assistance as the Government may deem proper from one or more agencies of the United Nations system;

(b) Linking of the programming processes and existing programme instruments of various United Nations organizations through a joint review mechanism orchestrated by the Government within the national programme framework;

(c) Strengthening the role of the resident co-ordinator in mobilizing the United Nations system's support to the Government for the development of a national programme framework and for the organization at the country level of the appraisal mechanism at the country level through which the existing programming processes will be linked.

B. Towards a United Nations system operational response

8. If those objectives can be attained in reasonable measure, the joint appraisal mechanism at the country level (as explained in paras. 41 and 42) will provide a real opportunity actually to give greater coherence to existing programming instruments. The concept of a document containing the response of the United Nations system to the national programme framework can take a concrete shape in such a situation by drawing on information emanating from the review mechanism at the country level and possibly through the annual or ad hoc reports of the resident co-ordinator (see para. 42).

9. The rationale for limiting the study to the United Nations system at this stage is the same as for the review carried out in response to resolution 42/196. United Nations organizations are accepted to be more neutral and less disparate than other components of the aid agglomerate; they include agencies with wide accumulated knowledge and experience of the development potential and constraints in each sector at the country level; they have had direct practical exposure to the requirements of a country programming process; there is a significant field staff presence of the United Nations system in developing countries; and, in spite of all the criticism levelled against them, they have in a number of instances already evolved close links among themselves for active collaboration and integration of their activities at the project and sector level, when common interests and shared

responsibilities are clearly identified and supported without ambivalence by the Government. If it proves feasible to develop a national programme framework to serve as a frame of reference for the United Nations system, this should also help improve the coherence of assistance from bilateral and other multilateral sources with national priorities, and more particularly facilitate the task of the recipient Government in integrating all assistance with the national development programmes.

10. After several years of inertia, there now appears to be a keen awareness at the headquarters of the major organizations of the need to forge broader collaboration to assist the Government more effectively at the country level. This is manifest in the positive reaction to the operative paragraphs of resolution 44/211, and more significantly in the decision that UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA have taken to try and harmonize their programming cycles with the national planning or budget cycle at the country level. There is also a broad measure of agreement that all operational activities for development should be planned and implemented in a programme rather than a project context in order to ensure close linkage between domestic and external inputs within the perspective of the national programme. National execution has been agreed as the general mode of execution of United Nations system assistance. The central role of the resident co-ordinator is being supported more actively.

11. There are, however, still unresolved issues, such as the discussions on the new support cost arrangements between UNDP and the specialized agencies and, more importantly, the attitude of the individual Governments at the country level, which could slow down progress towards overcoming some of the major weaknesses in the present system of technical co-operation and related operational activities, which are referred to in the next section of the present study.

II. THE ESSENCE OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

A. The paramount role of the recipient country

12. The most striking impression drawn from the experience with operational activities for development within the United Nations system during the last four decades is that the success or effectiveness of those activities is related directly to the degree of involvement of the recipient country in the planning and execution of the activities.

13. The degree of involvement of the recipient country has been shown to depend on several factors. First and foremost, it is a function of the recipient Government's attitude towards "grant assistance" and its ability to identify critical gaps in knowledge, skills or material and the types of external inputs it would need for the successful implementation of economic and social programmes of high priority. Assistance channelled through the United Nations system (or from other sources, for that matter) does not achieve development by itself; it can facilitate progress towards a limited goal, or provide temporary relief. External assistance can tackle only a few of the numerous key variables that influence the

attainment of economic and social goals, and its volume is circumscribed by circumstances beyond a country's control. If a recipient country is thus unable to integrate externally financed inputs with the remaining variables from domestic or other sources so as to be able to sustain follow-up action in respect of a particular activity or programme, it should have the facility to be able to consider alternative, more viable applications of the external inputs it has access to.

B. The opportunity cost of grant assistance

14. Grant assistance channelled through the operational activities of the United Nations system, or through other bilateral and multilateral sources, is not without cost to the recipient Government. Apart from the opportunity cost of specific external inputs themselves, all grant assistance for development imposes immediate and continuing burdens on the country's scarce human and budgetary resources (in terms of recurrent costs, for example) whose opportunity cost cannot be lightly brushed aside. Then there are obvious linkages between development goals, which often tend to be ignored by individual government departments and external agencies to the serious detriment of a long-term development strategy. Grant assistance in support of social programmes in the fields of health and education, for example, cannot be divorced from consideration of employment and income-generating programmes, or from those aimed at improvements in food production and distribution and population control.

C. The impact of global development objectives

15. The recipient's ability, even inclination, to assume fuller and more direct responsibility for operational activities for development has been further influenced by the degree of compatibility between broad global development objectives advocated by the United Nations agencies (and bilateral donors) - alleviation of poverty, integrated rural development, women in development and environment, to mention only a few - and the critical priority needs as perceived by the recipient Governments at the country level at a particular point of time. Several evaluation studies have drawn attention to the frequent shifts in donor concerns and policies, which have often overshadowed the need for stable long-term strategies. Donor fads have often tended to make projects formulated by them more complicated when the situation called for sustained attention to a few simpler matters. There has also been a tendency among donors to vie with each other to orient their assistance at the country level to particular global or social objectives in vogue, neglecting other activities that in the eyes of the Government may have equal or even greater importance. The result has often been too many external agencies doing the same thing in the same country, or even worse, doing the same thing differently.

D. The diversity of aid procedures

16. The developing countries' involvement in the planning and execution of operational activities for development has also been strained by the diversity of programme cycles and procedures pursued by different funding sources within the United Nations system and outside. Differences in such areas as project and programme formats, and criteria or procedures used in their formulation, appraisal and evaluation, in accounting and auditing requirements, and in the preparation of progress and terminal reports tend to perpetuate dependency on external sources among recipient Governments. While there has been growing awareness about the adverse impact of those differences and the need for promoting harmony and simplification in those and other areas (see para. 40), there has been very little movement in that direction.

E. The preoccupation with volume of aid and delivery

17. The prevailing attitudes among donors and recipients towards measuring the success or failure of grant assistance has also tended to lessen the developing countries' active involvement in the programming and implementation of operational activities for development. While the developing countries have been concerned primarily with increasing the volume of grant assistance without taking sufficiently into account its relevance or real impact on domestic development policies and programmes, the organizations of the United Nations system and other aid management agencies have been similarly preoccupied with the rate of delivery and the achievement of goals and targets prescribed by them. The continued dependency in most developing countries on external institutions and expatriate personnel for the implementation of grant assistance and their passive participation in the programming processes of the funding agencies may be traced to the prevalence of those attitudes.

F. The donor orientation of aid

18. It is significant to note in this context that assessments and evaluations carried out or commissioned by several multilateral and bilateral organizations referred to earlier have consistently underlined the "donor-driven" nature of the policy framework and programming procedures, which have diminished the recipient Government's role and in some cases actually weakened national capabilities. The "butterfly approach", whereby projects are identified on an *ad hoc* basis, as well as the current system of disjointed country programming processes, are believed to have resulted more in building the capacity of multilateral and bilateral funding agencies and staff than those of recipient Governments. 2/ These comments may not be applicable to all countries with equal severity, the situation being more dismal in sub-Saharan Africa and in the least developed countries generally than in several countries in North Africa, Asia and South America. If the general situation with respect to capacity-building had not been so disturbing, many of the countries subjected to structural adjustment programmes might have been in a position to escape the rigours of externally imposed measures through more timely initiation of an internalized "structured adjustment" process.

19. It is against this general background that the issues relating to the development of a national programming framework, setting up of a government-led review mechanism for operational activities for development at the country level, and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations resident co-ordinator, which are discussed in the next section, should be considered.

III. NATIONAL PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM'S RESPONSE

A. Basic postulates

20. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 44/211, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the recipient Governments had the sole responsibility for the co-ordination of external assistance and the principal responsibility for its design and management, and that the exercise of those responsibilities was crucial to the optimal use of external assistance and to the strengthening and utilization of national capacity. The Assembly also emphasized the need for full utilization of national capacities in all aspects of the programming processes and project cycle of operational activities (para. 13).

21. In the resolution the Assembly decided that the recipient Governments should formulate, in accordance with their own development plans and priorities, integrated national programme frameworks setting out the co-operation requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system, which would enable the system to support more effectively the development priorities of developing countries and to be more country-focused and would facilitate the development of a programme approach, through the clear definition of national objectives and systematic analysis of development problems and constraints (para. 17 (a)).

B. Project vs. programme approach

22. As stated earlier, there is already a wide measure of agreement within the United Nations system that operational activities for development should shift from a project to a programme approach. Though the nature and intent of the latter does not appear to be clearly defined, a programme approach (as opposed to the project approach) means in effect that United Nations system inputs will be merged with national and other external inputs in support of programmes that have been conceived with the host country on the basis of in-depth and, as necessary, cross-sectoral analysis of the total context of development needs and intended increments. The programme itself may not be time-bound, even if the United Nations system and other external inputs have a specified period of validity.

23. This would promote greater flexibility in adapting the United Nations system's operational activities to the critical needs of the country by choosing the most effective inputs (expatriate or national experts, equipment and supplies, food aid, funds for recurrent costs, etc.) and integrating those inputs which might be channelled through different United Nations organizations within the specified

programme objectives. The programme approach will also imply the facility for transferring allocations for one type of input to another within agreed limits (e.g. from expert component to equipment and supplies and vice versa) as the programme progresses. This in turn implies greater decentralization from United Nations system headquarters to the country level.

24. A clear distinction must be drawn in this context between a programme approach at the development activity level (as opposed to a project approach) and the country programming process, which allocates the resources available to an agency or an organization among various activities or projects in a particular country. Neither is contingent on the other. For example, it is quite feasible, in fact imperative, for WFP or for the specialized agencies administering trust funds for operational activities for development to adopt the programme approach within their existing project cycles, by ensuring that food or other inputs channelled through them are utilized to strengthen resource allocations to ongoing and continuing national development programmes and not as self-contained time-bound WFP or agency projects in isolation.

25. Some agencies have used the concept of a programme approach in terms of a cluster of projects aimed at supporting the achievement of a common objective or goal. UNDP has occasionally used a similar approach under the title of an "umbrella" project. While such an approach is a distinct improvement on the traditional project approach and has proved helpful in integrating external inputs more effectively at the project or activity level, it does not catch the essence of the programme approach, which focuses on integrating external assistance inputs with local resources already budgeted for by the Government or another national entity. The object is to strengthen the national effort already under way, which the local entities expect to be able to continue beyond the period of external assistance in question, rather than to promote a new programme or activity in a resource vacuum. It is important that the concept is critically examined by UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA and WFP along with other organizations in the light of their respective experiences at the country level. The degree of decentralization and flexibility which characterizes UNICEF operations, for example, is an important element in a viable programme approach that other organizations may wish to adopt in the management of their operational activities for development.

26. The success of a programme approach is closely linked to the establishment of clear, specific national goals and strategies so that there are unambiguous, prioritized national criteria for resource allocation around which external assistance must be designed. Clear programme criteria are also needed in order to address the concern of accountability in the broadest sense, i.e. monitoring the development impact and cost-effectiveness of inputs.

C. Existing policy frameworks for country programming

27. Attention was drawn in the earlier study on "Programming of operational activities of the United Nations system" 1/ to the multifaceted activities of the various agencies and organizations in support of national policy formulation.

Emphasis was placed on the opportunities that exist for promoting and strengthening the linkages among those activities in countries where the Government may wish to seek assistance in developing a holistic programme framework. With the agreement in principle among UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA to harmonize their programming cycles with those of the national planning and budget cycles, the opportunity has moved much closer to reality.

28. UNDP, in its assistance to Governments in the programming of technical co-operation, has launched a variety of needs assessment and programming initiatives as ways to identify areas suitable for intervention. Specifically, for the fifth cycle country programmes, which will be considered in 1991-92, UNDP will seek:

(a) To identify the development objectives of the national plans and strategies;

(b) To identify the objectives of the programme areas that the UNDP country programme will support;

(c) To define the strategies for achieving the objectives of each programme area and the technical, financial, institutional and material resources required, utilizing both national and external resources;

(d) To describe the broad technical co-operation priorities needed for achieving programme area objectives;

(e) Within the above technical co-operation priorities, to describe the themes for UNDP involvement, establishing the criteria that determine the nature of UNDP support to the programme areas;

(f) To explain how those criteria are based on the optimal use of UNDP's unique advantages relative to other technical co-operation sources, including how UNDP support relates to other contributions.

29. Programming of UNFPA assistance to developing countries has evolved from its initial ad hoc project orientation into a comprehensive country programming process in most countries. Until recently a basic needs assessment exercise constituted the basis for identifying and assessing a country's resource requirements for population activities. By 1989 more than 100 basic needs assessments had been carried out. They are now being replaced by the programme review and strategy development exercise, which is carried out jointly with the Government. The new approach aims at combining the features of in-depth, independent evaluations with those of the previous country programme reviews and needs assessment exercises.

30. The purpose of the programme review and strategy exercise is to assist the Government in the development or strengthening of a national population programme within the framework of the Government's overall development objectives and in defining external assistance needs, including support from UNFPA. The exercise is based on intensive desk analysis by UNFPA staff in the country followed by a four-

to-six-week staff mission for intensive discussions with the Government, non-governmental organizations and other multilateral and bilateral agency representatives in the country.

31. In the case of UNICEF, the corresponding analytical work on programme preparation is initiated at the country level by a position paper and a draft work plan, which is then followed by a comprehensive analysis of the situation of children and women and the social sector services supporting their well-being. The position paper is a brief document that gives a rapid overview of the situation of children and women in the country as well as of the broad economic, political and social trends affecting them; the status of the national development plan; a review of the current programmes involving UNICEF, incorporating the results of monitoring and evaluation; and a tentative indication of alternative possibilities and priorities for improving the situation of children. The work plan simply identifies the tasks to be accomplished as part of the country programming process by government and UNICEF staff or consultants and other entities.

32. Within the framework of the programme preparation process, the situation analysis is designed to identify the main problems affecting children and women, causes, opportunities for action, the results of the previous cycle of government/UNICEF co-operation, the status of children with respect to declared targets and global goals, and the relative priorities for UNICEF support. The analysis aims at arriving at a concise identification of priorities for action in favour of children and women. In some countries, the situation analysis takes the shape of a major study that might cover issues well beyond UNICEF capacity for active interventions.

33. The World Health Organization (WHO) allocates technical assistance funds at the country level on the basis of a two-year country programme budget. This is based on global priorities established in the six-year programme of work of WHO and analysis of national priorities within that global framework. Allocation of other grant assistance channelled through WFP (food aid), the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the specialized agencies (trust funds) are programmed on a project basis. Those agencies prepare a wide array of analytical or sector studies that are not directly linked to the programming of operational activities, but may have some potential for that purpose. They include food aid planning reviews, which still remain in an experimental stage, education sector reviews prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, industrial development reviews by the Regional and Country Studies Branch of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); regional and country agriculture sector studies by FAO; and rural small farm sector studies by IFAD. Other specialized agencies and organizations probably would add to this list.

D. A holistic national programme framework

34. All these analytical sector studies, situation analyses and needs assessment exercises are undertaken independently of each other and their quality and

effectiveness as a programme framework vary considerably. The recipient Governments can draw on this accumulated experience within the United Nations system to develop a holistic national programme framework. The primary objectives of that approach will be to strengthen linkages between macro-economic planning and sectoral or subsectoral strategies for the benefit of government departments as well as the international community in defining the latter's assistance more sharply from the recipient country's standpoint. It will ensure that the development interventions in one sector or programme being supported by one or more external agencies do not unwittingly undermine other development imperatives. A holistic approach should also help go beyond the priorities of short-term stabilization and adjustment by defining and focusing on long-term development goals.

E. Round-table meetings and consultative groups

35. The precise nature and content of a national programme framework will indeed vary from country to country, depending on the availability of data and the nature and extent of planning and programming instruments already in force. In those countries where the UNDP-sponsored round-table meetings or the World Bank-led consultative groups are already in operation, UNDP has been asked to assist the Governments in the preparation of a policy framework for technical co-operation as part of the preparatory work. The Governments concerned must exercise their paramount responsibility in the preparation of such a framework with such assistance as might be needed from UNDP and from UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and the specialized agencies as well. With the Government assuming that responsibility as part of its planning and programming functions, the type of a viable national programme framework can be conveniently developed around the round-table meetings and the consultative groups, with appropriate arrangements for updating as and when required.

F. The NaTCAP process

36. Another welcome development initiated by UNDP in several African countries is the preparation of a National Technical Co-operation Assessment and Programme (NaTCAP) aimed at strengthening the management and planning of technical co-operation resources by the recipient Government. The process focuses on: (a) establishing a clear data base on technical co-operation; (b) defining the Government's policy framework for technical co-operation; (c) establishing a priority technical co-operation programme for the country as a whole; and (d) in the long term, developing institutional capacity for stronger management of technical co-operation.

37. The activity was started in 1986-1987 on a pilot basis in 10 countries. In 1989, 11 more countries were included, with about 12 countries joining in 1990, bringing the total to over 30. The methodology emphasizes that the NaTCAP should be a process driven by the Government. It should not be a set of studies by consultants but a process for national reflection and consultations within the

country and between the Government and the potential donors on technical co-operation effectiveness, priorities and requirements. The process is currently being managed and financed by UNDP and is expected to take a minimum of two years in each country.

38. Conceptually, the NaTCAP approach is as good a model for a national programming framework as one can visualize in countries that are able to finance and sustain the exercise on a continuing basis. The process must, however, take three major factors into consideration before it can encompass the operational activities for development being promoted and funded by UNICEF and WFP, for example. Firstly, the process must allow for the consideration of all types of non-investment aid input (including food aid, medical supplies, budget support and so on) that developing countries are expected to need besides technical assistance. Secondly, for the same reason, the process must encourage the widest support and participation from the entire United Nations system in order to ensure that the Government has easy and continuous access to policy and technical support in all sectors. Thirdly, and most importantly, the process must become internalized as part of the regular programming and planning activities of the Government, with the bulk of analytical and financial support coming from within the government departments and national institutions.

G. The main components of a national programme framework

39. Irrespective of how the Government sets about developing a national programme framework, it will build on the experience accumulated in connection with the country programming exercises of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO, in essence, that is, the national framework will seek to link the analytical work already being done in connection with those exercises and other programming instruments referred to in the preceding paragraphs. The Government will also draw on the sector and subsector review processes of other United Nations agencies and the country-focused studies of the World Bank. The main components of the framework will be the following:

(a) As clear a statement of national development strategies and priorities as the Government is able to provide. This will entail review and synthesis of the national plan or other similar documentation supplemented by information already available from sectoral or multisectoral studies that may have been made by the Government, the organizations of the United Nations system, other multilateral or bilateral programmes, or any relevant material prepared for a consultative group, round-table meeting or a NaTCAP in preparation.

(b) A synthesis of lessons drawn from the assessment of past technical assistance and other operational activities for development supported by the United Nations system and other donors, including the use of food aid. The synthesis will be organized by the Government with the assistance of the United Nations organizations and agencies as appropriate.

(c) Identification of specific priority programmes where technical assistance and food aid or other related assistance (e.g. medical supplies, budget support, etc.) would play a critical role in overcoming constraints.

(d) An analysis of resource and staff constraints on achieving established programme objectives in specific programmes in each sector, with identification of the programmes the Government would wish the United Nations system organizations to support. This will include an indication of the total resource requirements estimated for each programme, resources committed or likely to be committed by the Government, resources already committed or expected from other external sources, and the sequence and time-frame in which the Government plans to carry out individual programmes. This exercise, as well as that under (c) above, will be undertaken by line departments of the Government in active consultation with the staff of the appropriate United Nations organizations and other external agencies at the country level.

H. Harmonization of programme cycles and procedures

40. The United Nations organizations and agencies would continue to collaborate with the appropriate government departments and national institutions for the preparation of their country programmes and projects according to the procedures and timetable previously agreed with the Government, substituting their analytical studies by the national programme framework. It is assumed that UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF will harmonize their programme cycles with the planning and budget cycles of the Government as the basis for a collaborative effort in supporting the development of the national programme framework. Action will also be needed to arrive at a common understanding among them on such matters as the definition of a project and a programme, the latter as distinct from a country programme; format and content of project, programme and country programme documents; the periodicity and content of progress and terminal reports; monitoring and evaluation arrangements; accounting and auditing procedures; programme execution or implementation modalities; use of national staff and institutions; provision of monetary incentives to national civil servants; assistance to the private sector and non-governmental organizations; and other similar issues on which a common approach is desirable and feasible.

I. Country programme appraisal mechanism

41. The joint appraisal of the individual country programmes (and WFP projects) is another essential condition for giving greater coherence to those programming instruments and relating them more critically to the national programme framework. Such a review could be undertaken by an appraisal and action committee or some such mechanism chaired by a senior and influential representative of the Government with membership extending to government line departments, as appropriate, and to the representatives of the United Nations organizations (and other external agencies) at the country level. The function of such a committee would be to analyse individual programmes for possible operational links between activities of

government departments on the one hand and United Nations agencies on the other. The appraisal process should also ensure as close an integration as possible between national and external inputs and sustainability of individual programmes and projects. The appraisal process should help overcome policy differences among international agencies and among government departments; it will also assist in making mid-stream corrections in individual programmes taking due account of the impact of such changes upon other programmes.

42. The conclusions of such an appraisal and action committee on the initial scrutiny of the individual country programmes could well then serve several vital purposes:

(a) The conclusions would form the basis for the elaboration of the "document" visualized in paragraph 17 (g) of resolution 44/211 to reflect the integrated operational response of the United Nations system at the country level to the national programme framework. Such a document could be prepared by the resident co-ordinator in consultation with the national chairman of the appraisal and action committee and members of the United Nations country team, and approved by the committee.

(b) Such a document would naturally have an opening overview section in which all the programmes of the system during the forthcoming national cycle period could be shown for their co-relations and reinforcements within the relevant segments of the national programme framework.

(c) Since, at present, the structure of the United Nations system provides for separate governing bodies each of which must receive and approve an appropriate country programming instrument, these would then go forward, but each could incorporate the initial overview section of the above new document.

(d) The new documents prepared at the country level would provide the basis for the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on progress towards achieving an integrated operational response of the system to the national programme frameworks.

43. Prima facie, these steps may look too demanding, but considering the time and resources that are currently allocated for the analytical and assessment studies related to the programming processes of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO and for the project identification and formulation activities of WFP and other organizations, it would seem well within the realm of possibility. The major restraining factors would be if there were lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Government to exercise its paramount responsibility and any reluctance on the part of the United Nations organizations to move away from their current moorings.

J. The critical role of the resident co-ordinator

44. The extent to which the United Nations resident co-ordinator is able to mobilize the technical expertise of the United Nations system at the country level will have significant influence on the development and effective use of the national programme framework. There are two basic issues that need attention in this regard. The first relates to the dual responsibilities that the resident co-ordinator has to discharge concurrently - as UNDP resident representative with direct responsibility for the UNDP country programme and other multifaceted activities of UNDP, and as the United Nations resident co-ordinator to maintain an overview of the operational activities for development of all United Nations organizations and agencies at the country level. Ironically, it is the UNDP resident representative and not the United Nations resident co-ordinator who continues to be designated country representative of all United Nations organizations and agencies that do not maintain field representation.

45. There is a widespread feeling within the United Nations system that under these arrangements the resident co-ordinator faces a conflict of interest in a bureaucratic sense, having to give full attention to the affairs of UNDP and looking after the rest of the activities of the United Nations system only marginally. WFP and UNFPA, in particular, have appointed their own staff members to act as director of operations at the country level, with the UNDP resident representative continuing to act as their country representative in a formal representational sense. Questions have been raised as to whether UNDP also should not consider designating one of its deputy resident representatives in each country as the director of UNDP operations, thereby releasing the resident representative (and some of the staff) to act as full-time resident co-ordinator for the operational activities of the United Nations system. There may be, of course, other options that can achieve the same objective without creating another layer of bureaucracy at the headquarter or country level. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of such possibilities except to stress that the issue needs to be tackled soon if the objective of giving greater coherence to the operational activities of the system at the country level is to be achieved on a sustained basis.

46. A much more important consideration to note in relation to the critical role of the resident co-ordinator in this regard is the criteria for selection, training and orientation of the individuals appointed to the office. The issue has been under active discussion and already a promising start has been made for establishing a training centre for resident co-ordinators at Turin, Italy. Real progress in upgrading the professional credibility of the incumbents through training, more intensive briefing at agency headquarters and intimate exposure to the development issues and constraints at the country level is, however, contingent on the post of the resident co-ordinator becoming full-time with adequate staff support.

47. It is intriguing to note that, following the adoption of resolution 44/211 by the General Assembly, some of the resident co-ordinators have already stepped up the process of consultation with their agency colleagues at the country level.

Some have gone so far as to set up inter-agency committees and explore the possibility of initiating joint or collaborative programming exercises. While this is a welcome index of the potential that already exists for collaborative effort at the country level, it is open to question if it would be wise to encourage such scattered initiatives till the various steps in the process have been clarified at the agency headquarters and with the Government concerned. It is important to emphasize the point once again in this context that unless the Government is in the driving seat and is willing to exercise its paramount responsibility, such attempts at inter-agency co-ordination within the United Nations system may prove elusive or transitory.

K. Agenda for action

48. The agenda for action requires that the momentum generated by the triennial policy review and resolution 44/211 be sustained through concretizing actions that have already received implicit or explicit endorsement by several organizations. Considerable preparatory work will be required at the country level, for example, before the harmonization of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA programme cycles with the national planning or budget cycle can become operational. The approach will be country-focused rather than global, and will require careful consultations with each Government. Similarly, it is not clear if each recipient Government will be sufficiently responsive to the idea of developing a national programme framework. It would be safe to assume, however, that the majority of those who choose to do so would seek United Nations system assistance in developing a viable framework. Mobilization of such assistance, which might involve written inputs by some of the agencies, staff visits, recruitment of expatriate or national consultants, setting up of an interdepartmental task force by the Government, or other similar actions, will have to be co-ordinated by the Government and the United Nations resident co-ordinator, including mobilization of funds for the exercise.

49. The first obvious responsibility thus lies with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to ask the resident co-ordinators to explore those possibilities with the Governments and propose a plan of action for each country. The premise of the consultations is that the Governments see the merits of the approach and are willing to seize the initiative. In countries where the Government may not feel it necessary to adopt the national programme framework instrumentality, there would still be considerable value in joint or simultaneous situation analysis and needs assessment exercises for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF under government direction. The resident co-ordinators must make concrete proposals about the type of appraisal mechanism, as outlined in paragraph 41, that the Government is willing and able to support in each country.

50. UNDP is currently developing the programme approach in place of projects and is also defining the limits of national execution and decentralization to the country level. As UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA are also committed to that approach, close collaboration between them and UNDP, with the possible participation of WFP and one or more agencies, should be promoted in order to make a critical examination of the experience to date so as to arrive at a common United Nations system-wide

definition of those concepts. The initiative in this regard may be taken by the Administrator of UNDP. The approach evolved during consultations may then be discussed by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) for wider adoption within the system.

51. As suggested earlier, action is also needed in order to arrive at a common understanding within the United Nations system on other terms and procedures being used in relation to the various aspects of programming and implementation of operational activities for development. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation should urge the executive heads of organizations of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy to set up a task force consisting of qualified staff members from their respective organizations to review the relevant sections of their operations manuals so as to reach agreement on possible revisions about methods and procedures and associated terms and formats (see para. 40). Other agencies might be associated with the exercise after a basic agreement is reached within the context of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. It must be stressed, however, that the effort involved and the importance of the task will require 12 to 18 weeks of full-time sustained effort by members of the proposed task force and that the work cannot be accomplished entirely at the level of the harmonization subgroup of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy as at present constituted.

52. The issues of national execution and support costs have raised serious concerns among specialized agencies about the nature and extent of their future involvement in operational activities funded by UNDP and UNFPA. The decisions that the UNDP Governing Council will take this summer on those issues will thus have a significant influence on the extent to and the manner in which the developing countries will be able to draw on the accumulated technical knowledge and development experience of the specialized agencies for sectoral support. At the country level, the resident co-ordinator, in consultation with the agency representatives or headquarters, will advise the Government how best to draw on that experience.

53. The issues of the "leadership role of the United Nations Development Programme" within the United Nations system, and that of resident co-ordinator at the country level, are interlinked to a large degree and might involve a discussion on possible structural adjustments within the system that are outside the purview of the present study. The questions relating to the role of the resident co-ordinator and their capacity have however been alluded to in passing in paragraphs 44 to 47. Attention may also be drawn to the review of some of the critical factors bearing on relations between UNDP and other organizations of the United Nations system in the report on "Programming of operational activities of the United Nations system" referred to in paragraph 2.

54. It is also worth repeating one of the conclusions of that report that, while there is growing awareness within the system of the need for change, and a wide measure of agreement on the directions the changes should take, movement in those directions has been restrained in the past by the absence of a suitable mechanism with sufficient authority to initiate action and monitor progress.

Notes

1/ See paragraphs 212-239 of the report entitled "Comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system" (A/44/324-E/1989/106) and Technical Paper No. 5, "Programming of operational activities of the United Nations system", by Bhim S. Mahajan, New York, April 1989.

2/ See "Aid co-ordination and effectiveness: least developed countries, 1981-89", a study prepared for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) by M. Williams and D. R. Panday; "Technical co-operation in Africa, issues and concerns for improving effectiveness", January 1990, United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990/World Bank/UNDP Task Force; the "Review of field programmes", a biennial FAO report; the Nordic evaluation of the effectiveness of technical co-operation personnel in Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia; the 1985 study by the Ministry of Co-operation of the Federal Republic of Germany; and The World Development Report 1990, issued by the World Bank, with the focus on poverty.

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Second regular session of 1990
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In the annex to his present annual report on operational activities, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation provides the texts of inter-organizational agreements that will facilitate adjustments and improvements called for in General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989.

A. Enhancing the resident co-ordinator system

2. In paragraph 15 (b) of its resolution 44/211, the General Assembly decided to reinforce the team-leadership capacity of the resident co-ordinator within the United Nations system at the country level for the integration of the sectoral inputs of the system and for the effective and coherent co-ordination of the response of the United Nations system to national programme frameworks through, inter alia, a clarified and strengthened mandate from the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, in accordance with Assembly resolutions 32/197, 41/171 and 42/196 of 20 December 1977, 5 December 1986 and 11 December 1987, respectively and closer co-operation of the field representation of the United Nations system at the country level with the resident co-ordinator.

3. At its April 1990 session, the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) further examined its 1989 recommendations as endorsed by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination 1/ on enhancing the role and effectiveness of the resident co-ordinator system. The Committee took note of a

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* A/45/50.

consolidated text of decisions covering its 1989 sessions, as well as of its current session, and recommended that the Director-General, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other Executive Heads should convey the text to their respective field representatives and headquarters staff. The Committee also agreed that the spirit and content of the decisions which constituted guidelines would be appropriately incorporated by each organization into the terms of reference of their respective field representatives.

4. The text to be issued in common is contained in section A of the annex to the present note.

B. Harmonization of programme cycles

5. In paragraph 17 (c) of resolution 44/211, the General Assembly decided that programme cycles of all funding agencies of the United Nations system should be harmonized with and adapted to the planning periods of national Governments, and further consideration should be given to the introduction of budgetary cycles on a rolling-cycle basis.

6. At its first general meeting in 1990, the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, agreed to issue a joint letter on harmonization to their field representatives. The Group, it will be recalled, comprises UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

7. The text of the agreed joint letter is contained in section B of the annex.

Notes

1/ See ACC/1989/DEC/1-20.

ANNEX

A. Enhancing the role and effectiveness of the resident co-ordinator system

Text to be sent to respective field representatives and headquarters staff

In response also to paragraph 25 of General Assembly resolution 42/196 which invited the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to review the inter-agency agreements concerning resident co-ordinators, the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) recommended and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination agreed that, while existing instructions, particularly those contained in General Assembly resolutions 42/196 and 34/213 were considered to be sufficiently comprehensive, they needed to be interpreted and adapted to meet the varied country circumstances in the light also of evolving circumstances. To this end, it was agreed, inter alia:

At the global level

(a) To broaden the selection process of resident co-ordinators, and further develop the roster of potential candidates on the basis of criteria which it elaborated;

(b) With a view to expediting clearance procedures for the appointment/designation of UNDP resident representatives/co-ordinators, to adopt modified procedures;

(c) Having emphasized the concept of a United Nations development team at the country level, to give equal emphasis to the background and experience of field representatives of individual organizations;

(d) To facilitate the exchange of senior and middle-level staff among organizations of the system as a means also of promoting an esprit de corps of an international development service;

(e) To identify common elements that could be included in the terms of reference of all field representatives of the system;

(f) To strengthen briefing, and institute joint "refresher training" programmes for resident co-ordinators, as well as for other members of the country teams. To this end, to be guided by the broad framework of both arrangements for, and the content of briefing arrangements set out in the annexed note, and to implement the United Nations system "Proposal for the management of field co-ordination - orientation programme for resident co-ordinators and other field representatives" beginning in late 1990. In addition, each organization would include in their current training programmes for field representatives, relevant aspects of the role of their organizations in support of the United Nations system, especially at the country level;

(g) To prepare a United Nations system handbook for Governments and their development partners on the mandates and capacities of the system;

(h) To identify the type of technical expertise and other support required by resident co-ordinators in different country circumstances, better enabling them to speedily mobilize expertise, in particular of the system, and considering ways of providing them with programme support funding for that purpose;

(i) To strengthen, drawing also on organizations of the system, the staff resources at the disposal of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, to support resident co-ordinators in exercising their functions, enhancing the level of dialogue with them on, inter alia, global themes and priorities, as well as monitoring steps to enhance co-ordination arrangements;

(j) To consider areas in which a further decentralization by member organizations from their headquarters to the field could serve to enhance collaboration at the country level;

(k) To consider special measures in regard to the role of resident co-ordinators with respect to organizations without field representation. They would include:

(i) The provision by such organizations of country-specific briefing material to supplement the general information contained in the handbook referred to in paragraph (g) above, and arranging special briefings for their respective technical counterpart ministries;

(ii) Special efforts to have more organizations brief resident co-ordinators, where necessary, through their representatives located at Geneva and New York;

(iii) Ensuring that such organizations are kept systematically informed of programming exercises, meetings, etc., so that they can provide appropriate inputs, especially where their sectoral areas of competence constitute potentially significant areas of advice of assistance in the concerned countries;

(iv) Inviting resident co-ordinators, as appropriate, to assign officials with special responsibility for one or more organizations to keep abreast of matters falling within the competence of those organizations; the organizations might in turn consider briefing and training for such officials at their respective headquarters or regional offices;

(l) To encourage the sharing of common premises and services, unless particular requirements or material conditions impose limitations on such sharing;

(m) That, prior to the appointment of the resident co-ordinator or in the event of prolonged absences from her/his duty station, the functions would be rotated or assigned to the United Nations system colleague most senior in grade or in post;

and, at the country level, that resident co-ordinators

(n) Be encouraged, in consultation with the field representatives of organizations of the system, further to elaborate, as appropriate, their roles in the light of the particular needs and circumstances of each country, in consultation with the host Governments. It is anticipated that Governments would wish to do so in collaboration with individual sectoral ministries so as to ensure better broad support for such arrangements;

(o) Be encouraged to establish inter-agency advisory groups focused around priority sectors or themes to assist in facilitating a coherent and integrated approach by all organizations in support of the Government's plans and priorities. Such groups would normally be chaired by the agency or group most directly involved with the sector or theme;

(p) In agreement with the other field representatives of organizations of the system, be encouraged to promote greater cross-participation in each other's programme processes; common elements of mid-term programme reviews, focusing on substantive directions; and collaboration in, for example, needs assessments, National Technical Co-operation Assessment Programmes and situation analyses;

(q) Be encouraged to draw more fully on the analytical capacities of all parts of the system, including those not normally involved in operational activities;

(r) Be encouraged to take full account of regional and interregional dimensions of development;

(s) Be provided with pertinent information regarding operational activities, including decisions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, and of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination machinery; be kept informed of programmes, activities and resources of individual organizations; maintain an active dialogue with other multilateral and bilateral partners and share the relevant information with their partners in the system; agree with their partners in the system on practical steps to keep each other informed in a timely manner of programme-related exercises; and develop with them an information system on developments related to technological and social changes, as well as country profiles;

(t) Be given timely notice of all visits to the country by senior staff of organizations of the system; be kept informed of the purposes and results of discussions at the country level having system-wide implications; themselves generally facilitate the exchange of relevant information available to them; and be kept informed of the creation of field offices and the designation of field representatives;

(u) Elaborate, in consultation with their partners in the system, a programme of public information on development issues;

(v) Be invited, together with their colleagues, to consider holding workshops or more informal sessions to collectively brief government officials, as well as one another's field representatives on their mandates, capacities and programmes, with a view to achieving greater coherence and better integration of United Nations system assistance.

ATTACHMENT TO SECTION A

Briefing of resident co-ordinators

The following proposals for the briefing at agency headquarters and, as appropriate, at their regional offices of, and by resident co-ordinators, are presented in the broader context of the various measures agreed at the Committee's first and second regular sessions of 1989, to enhance the role and effectiveness of the resident co-ordinator system.

The proposals outline broad objectives which individual organizations would develop in accordance with their individual circumstances and requirements. These include:

Arrangements

(a) The need for adequate notice of visits;

(b) Group meetings focused on broad policy and programme issues and, secondarily, on project issues;

(c) A meeting to be chaired by at least the Chief of the Department of Technical Co-operation. In appropriate cases, the resident co-ordinator is also to meet Executive Head and/or Deputy;

(d) Agency field representatives are to provide their respective headquarters with appropriate briefs prior to the visits;

(e) Resident co-ordinators are to inform the agency of particular issues they wish to raise which may require advance notice to agency;

(f) The particular importance of briefings with agencies not represented at the field level;

(g) Consideration might also be given to second and third level visits from offices of the resident co-ordinator, in particular, for officers having working-level responsibility for specific agencies.

Briefing by resident co-ordinators

(a) An assessment of the country's political, economic and social situation, with emphasis on major development challenges and implications for technical co-operation needs in the light of national capabilities;

(b) An overview of the United Nations programme and those of other development partners;

(c) An assessment of the United Nations presence in general, and of the particular organization, as well as of country-level co-ordination arrangements, especially in the context of the implementation of the instructions/guidelines referred to in section A above.

Briefing by agencies

(a) Current thinking on overall (and evolving) development issues and priorities for the 1990s;

(b) An overview of thinking on global, regional and, in particular, specific country situations, as well as of programme orientations, sector policies and modalities;

(c) Links between analytical, deliberative and normative functions, and operational activities;

(d) Evolving roles, structures, technical capacities and resources and constraints;

(e) Major objectives of the agency in the country concerned and their links with the broader goals and objectives of the Government;

(f) Specific problems regarding the agency's activities in the country and responses, as appropriate, to issues raised in the resident co-ordinator's annual report;

(g) Support needed from other members of United Nations system, and hence from resident co-ordinators.

In addition, agency representatives might, on the basis of instructions/guidelines from their respective headquarters, provide resident co-ordinators with a micro-brief on the agency's country sectoral orientations and field operational activities within 30 to 60 days of his arrival.

B. Joint letter sent to field representatives by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy on synchronization of programme cycles

Responses from the field to our last joint letter dated 4 April 1989 have been very good and provide very useful information on the co-ordination efforts at the field level and the problems that are being encountered in that regard. We wish to express to you our appreciation for your efforts and hope that the process of closer consultations and joint approaches evinced in your replies will continue and be strengthened.

Almost all of you expressed strong support for the need to synchronize programme cycles with the Government's planning cycle and urged that we should take

such an initiative. As we have already informed you, this has also been urged by our respective governing bodies as well as the General Assembly. In resolution 44/211 on operational activities, the General Assembly, inter alia, reiterates the request to all organizations of the United Nations engaged in operational activities to synchronize their programming cycles at the country level with the planning cycles of the respective host countries within the context of the National Programming Framework, as follows:

"17. Calls for ...

"...

"(b) The organizations of the United Nations system should adapt their programming processes to base them upon those national programme frameworks and the needs and practices of recipient Governments;

"(c) Programme cycles of all funding agencies of the United Nations system should be harmonized with and adapted to the planning periods of national Governments, and further consideration should be given to the introduction of budgetary cycles on a rolling-cycle basis;".

Based on the review of your responses to our 4 April 1989 letter, the meeting of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy held on 16 November 1989 decided to proceed with the synchronization of programming cycles of its members. We would, therefore, request you to approach your host Governments formally expressing our willingness to synchronize the programme cycles with the Government's development plan, if not yet done so. The decision on how best to make this formal proposal to the Government should be taken at the field level through consultation amongst you. In reaching that decision we would, however, ask you to bear in mind the following factors:

1. As mentioned, our governing bodies as well as the General Assembly have strongly urged synchronization of programme cycles.

2. The reason for this synchronization is to benefit the developing countries by strengthening their co-ordination of external aid so that programmes of co-operation will be mutually supportive and complementary.

3. The extent to which this synchronization takes place is for the Government to decide. Your role should be to assist and facilitate this process if the Government decides to proceed.

4. While we are asked to synchronize our planning cycles with the Government's planning cycle, this again will depend on Government's wishes and the extent to which the Government can use its development plan as a basis for strengthening its co-ordination of external aid. It may well be that in certain cases Governments may wish to see our cycles synchronized without direct reference to its planning cycle.

5. While of the five of our organizations only three (UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA) have programming cycles, we consider that the increased government co-ordination that would result from this approach would also encourage further synchronization and complementarity of assistance from WFP and IFAD.

We urge you to give this matter your immediate attention, and look forward to your progress report and plan of implementation on the results of this initiative by 1 October 1990.

Signed by the following:

Vice-President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development

Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

Assistant Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund

Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme